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TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2009

Media Highlights: Gul Warns Iran, Says Israeli Ties Strong; Secretary Clinton in Middle East; Israel-Turkey Normalization; Afghanistan Election Coverage; Turkey-Northern Iraq; Bill Clinton in Istanbul; Baykal Postpones Iraq Visit.

Gul Warns Iran: "It's Dangerous to Play with Nukes." All papers carry statements made by Turkish President Gul regarding Iran and Israel, made enroute to Slovakia. In "We Don't Want Nuclear Weapons in the Neighbor" mainstream Hurriyet gives front page coverage to Gul's remarks that Turkey did not want nuclear weapons in the region, especially in Iran. "Tehran needs to be more transparent in order to eliminate the concerns about Iran's nuclear aims," said Gul. Islamist-oriented Zaman, in "It is Dangerous to Play with Nukes," said Gul emphasized that problems with Iran should be solved with diplomacy, and that Iran "first must be transparent and open to the IAEA's inspection, in order to overcome suspicions." On the current shape of ties between Turkey and Israel, Gul said, "What matters is that the essence of Turkey-Israel ties is strong. But this doesn't mean we will turn a blind eye on wrongdoings."

On a question whether Turkey was shifting to the East, Gul said such claims stemmed from jealousy. "They are jealous because they see that Turkey is a rising star and becoming a model. They also see that their area of influence is shifting to Turkey," emphasized Gul.

On Turkey's EU bid, Gul said, "When we reach the EU standards, we might decide to act like Norway and abstain from joining the EU."

Commentary: Gul's Remarks on the Middle East

Columnist Sedat Ergin wrote in mainstream Hurriyet under the headline "Nuanced Stance from Gul to Iran and Israel:" On his way to Bratislava, President Gul said "to be able to participate in the Middle East Peace Process, Turkey's ties should be strong with Israel and all Muslim countries. There is no problem in the essence of the ties. However, this doesn't mean that mistakes and unfair behavior should be ignored." Ergin noted that President Gul's comments were parallel to US Ambassador Jeffrey's comments in Radikal last week, quoting Ambassador Jeffrey as saying "we hope that problems will be resolved between Turkey and Israel. Turkey was very successful in reaching to all parties in the region."

However, if you have diplomatic problems with one country, your ability to talk all the other parties for solution will be interrupted." Ergin summed up that, compared to PM Erdogan's comments, President Gul's comments "were more moderate and stable."

Secretary Clinton in Middle East: "Clinton Says Israel Must Show Gesture for Abbas' Efforts" (Hurriyet) Mainstream Hurriyet today reports that Secretary Clinton called on Israel to make greater efforts to ease tensions with Palestinians as she tried to overcome Arab anger over Jewish settlements. In a related story, in "Reaction to Clinton in Palestine," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says, "Palestinians protested Secretary Clinton's statements praising the Israeli government's offer to 'restrain' settlement growth. In protests in Ramallah, Palestinians accused President Obama of lying." Regarding US foreign policy in the region, Sahin Alpay wrote in Intellectual-Islamist oriented Zaman: "If Obama wants to protect the US interests in the critical Middle East region, he has to do this through diplomacy. Turkey's Middle East policy presents an excellent model for such a diplomacy."

Israel Seeks Normalization of Ties with Turkey (Zaman) Islamist-oriented Zaman reports President Shimon Peres, in a message to congratulate the 86th anniversary of the founding of Turkey, has invited President Gul to Israel. In his Republic Day message, Peres draws attention to the historic roots of ties between the two countries despite the problems seen time to time. Zaman says Ankara sees the message as a "positive development" in bilateral relations. Diplomatic sources said work was launched for a possible visit of the Turkish president to Israel, but did not give a clear date. Analysts believe "positive developments" were needed in the region to clear the way for Gul's visit to Israel, says Zaman. Mainstream

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Sabah says Turkey, just like Israel, believes the ups and downs in ties would not be lasting, and views the invitation as "positive."

Afghanistan Elections: "Second Karzai Term in Afghanistan" (Milliyet) Media continue their coverage on the latest developments on the Afghan elections. Papers note, "Afghan election officials cancelled the presidential run-off vote after Karzai's only rival, former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah, withdrew citing serious concerns about the election." Mainstream Hurriyet headline reads, "Karzai Declared Winner," while leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes, "Karzai President Again." In "Elections Cancelled, Karzai President," mainstream Sabah notes UNSG Ban Ki-Moon said "disputed presidential elections were the toughest elections that UN has ever supported." Liberal Radikal writes, "Again and Again President Karzai," highlighting, "President Obama admonished officially reelected Karzai to tackle corruption." Islamist-oriented Zaman headline reads, "Afghanistan Doesn't Go for Second Tour," and believes "after a period of political uncertainty, Afghanistan will face a legitimacy problem."

Turkey-Northern Iraq: Commentary on Kurdish Democratic Overture: Cuneyt Ulsever commented in Hurriyet under the headline "If This is Not Northern Iraqi Opening, What is it Then?" that "there are no concrete developments regarding the Kurdish opening since last May. As a matter of fact, the only concrete thing was the PKK members coming back to Turkey. Can someone tell me, could all recent developments be called a 'Kurdish Opening' or, as the part of the US plan to withdraw from Iraq, a 'Northern Iraqi Opening?'

Fikret Bila assessed in mainstream Milliyet: "There is no doubt that the US decision to withdraw from Iraq has a vital importance for the Northern Iraqi Regional Kurdish Administration. If the US withdraws and leaves the region unprotected, Northern Iraq will become a target for the Arabs, especially Sunni Arabs. And a big security problem will occur in the region. The most important reason for the US and the Northern Iraqi Administration to intensify their efforts to improve ties with Turkey is this US decision of pulling out of Iraq. There is no doubt that this issue is one of the legs of the AKP government's democratic opening."

Bill Clinton: "I Knew Turkey Would Put Its Mark on the World" All papers report former US President Bill Clinton addressed Monday the "Leadership for Sustainable Success" conference in Istanbul. Mainstream Hurriyet reports Clinton "apologized" for the

"US-sourced" economic crisis that spread around the globe. Clinton stressed "games with multiple winners" must be built. "For instance, welfare is rising in Turkey, but this is not the case everywhere around the world," said Clinton. On the current shape of politics in Turkey, Clinton said what Prime Minister Erdogan has done cannot be underestimated. He warned it was important to mix the secular republic built by Ataturk with "faith freedom." Clinton also said during his presidency, he knew that Turkey would put its mark on the world. The former US President also voiced support for Turkey's EU bid, and predicted Turkey's efficiency within the G-20 would increase. He noted, "Islam must be understood well; for that to happen, religion and politics must be kept away from each other. In this context, it's important that Turkey enters the EU." Conservative Star quotes Clinton on the 1996 Kardak (Imia) crisis between Greece and Turkey. "I thought my aides were joking when they said Turkey and Greece would engage in war over rocks on which none but sheep live. I held phone calls with the leaders of both countries, and convinced them to not go to war over the rocks that inhabited mostly 20 sheep," said Clinton, who had also observed the success of Greece-Turkey earthquake diplomacy.

Baykal Postpones Visit to Iraq

Papers report opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal's visit to Iraq, which was scheduled to take place on November 8-9, has been put off to a future date. Mainstream Hurriyet says Baykal believes the "outcome" of the government's "Democratic Initiative" must be seen before he pays a visit to northern Iraq. Leftist-nationalist

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Cumhuriyet reports the CHP said the visit was postponed due to the "intensity of the domestic agenda."

Upcoming events:

- Q November 3: President Gul is in Slovakia.
- Q November 3: Prime Minister Erdogan will address the AK Party group meeting in the parliament.
- Q November 5-9: The 25th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC) will be held in Istanbul.
- Q November 8-9: Iranian President Ahmadinejad will visit Istanbul to attend the OIC meeting.
- Q November 6: Foreign Minister Davutoglu will go to Paris for an official visit.
- Q November 10: The government will take to parliament for debate the "Democratic Initiative."
- Q November 11-12: Afghanistan Reconstruction Summit will be held in Istanbul.

TV News (NTV)

Domestic

- Q Health Ministry said the swine flu death toll in Turkey increased to nine. On Monday, a mass swine flu vaccination campaign has been kickstarted around Turkey.
- Q The military General Staff (TGS) says Anatolian Hawk military exercises will be held in Istanbul and Iskenderun from November 2-20.
- Q The 2010 budget has been opened to debate in the parliament.

World

- Q Foreign Minister Davutoglu, in Malaysia, will attend the D-8 Council of Ministers' meeting and meet with Foreign Minister Anifah Aman.
- Q Former Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic says he will appear at his trial in The Hague on genocide and war crimes charges.
- Q The UN says it is stopping long-term development work in northwestern Pakistan because of security concerns.

JEFFREY